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MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Women and the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 34/1 of 9 March 1990 on women and the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse, the Commission for the Status of Women requested the Secretary-General to inform the Commission about the progress achieved and the measures taken by Governments and the United Nations system concerning women's participation in the implementation of this resolution, starting with the session in 1993, until the end of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse. Developments at the level of the United Nations system related to women are described in the report and suggestions made regarding the next steps to be taken.

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CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION	1-2	3
I. UNITED NATIONS DECADE AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL PROGRAMME	3-7	3
II. ACTIVITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM	8-24	4
A. United Nations Secretariat	9-14	4
B. Research institutes	15-18	5
C. Specialized agencies	19-24	6

INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 34/1 of 9 March 1990 on women and the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse, the Commission for the Status of Women requested the Secretary-General to inform the Commission about the progress achieved and the measures taken by Governments and the United Nations system concerning women's participation in the implementation of this resolution, starting with the session in 1993, until the end of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse.

2. The present report contains a brief description of the activities relevant to women that are being carried out by organizations of the United Nations system as part of their contribution to the Decade. These include activities organized at the interagency level, with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme as the focal point.

I. UNITED NATIONS DECADE AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL PROGRAMME

3. The General Assembly, in the Political Declaration adopted at its seventeenth special session (General Assembly resolution S-17/2, annex) proclaimed the period 1991-2000 as the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse. The purpose of the Decade is to promote effective and sustained national, regional and international action, as well as the implementation of the Global Programme of Action adopted by the Assembly in the same resolution, with a view to preventing drug abuse and to combating illicit drug trafficking in all its manifestations.

4. Proceeding from its mandate (General Assembly resolution 45/179), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme is coordinating international efforts for the Decade by Governments, entities of the United Nations system and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Programme's Executive Director has appointed a coordinator for the Decade to serve on a full-time basis, on the understanding that he will be able to draw on all the resources of the Programme to ensure the success of the Decade.

5. Since women constitute the majority of the world's population, comprehensive activities directed towards the potentially vital role of women, particularly as mothers and educators, in creating an anti-drug abuse environment in societies, are planned by Governments, entities of the United Nations system and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations within the framework of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse and also in relation to the International Year of the Family in 1994.

6. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme is also coordinating cooperation within the United Nations system on activities concerning the role of women in matters related to drug control. The Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Coordination in Matters of International Drug Abuse Control, held at Vienna from 14 to 16 September 1992, decided that in 1994 the United Nations system should focus its attention on the theme: "Women, drug abuse and drug control" (ACC/1992/26, para. 24(b)).

7. The participants also agreed that the United Nations system should draft a single system-wide position paper for the Fourth World Conference on Women, on the theme: "Women, drug abuse and drug control" (ibid., paras. 1(d)(i) and 39).

II. ACTIVITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

8. Other than the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the main United Nations entities dealing with the issues of women and drug abuse and the role of women in drug control are the United Nations Secretariat (Division for the Advancement of Women and Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs/ United Nations Office at Vienna, and Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC)), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the International Labour Organistion (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Their activities since the beginning of the Decade are described below.

A. United Nations Secretariat

1. Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

(a) Division for the Advancement of Women

9. In the last six months of 1991, a working paper on the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) was prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women, which, among other issues, dealt with the problem of the female partners of male intravenous drug abusers being infected with the HIV virus. These links will be further elaborated on in a report to be submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-eighth session, under the key priority theme "Women in urban areas: population, nutrition and health factors for women in development, including migration, drug consumption and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome".

10. The Division for the Advancement of Women is a member of the Working Group on HIV/AIDS of the United Nations Office at Vienna, which consists of representatives from the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The focal point on AIDS within the United Nations Office at Vienna is a staff member of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who also chairs the Working Group.

(b) Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch

11. A staff member of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch attended a consultation of experts convened by the WHO Global Programme on AIDS in September 1992, to provide technical advice to WHO on the topic of AIDS and prisons. The Branch was thus able to participate in the drafting of guidelines and recommendations at that and subsequent consultations. The guidelines were drawn up for the guidance of prison authorities, and the recommendations were intended for both prison authorities and WHO. The Branch's contribution helped, among other things, to ensure that policies reflected in the guidelines and recommendations were consistent with existing United Nations criminal justice policies and, in particular, the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice, such as the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

12. In the guidelines, general principles are established for the treatment of HIV/AIDS in prisons, including matters such as medical care for prisoners that is of a quality equivalent to that available to the general public,

non-discrimination, education and after care. In particular, special attention is drawn to the needs of women prisoners and recommendations are made for dealing with the psychosocial and medical problems associated with HIV infection in women. Measures for preventing the transmission of HIV in prison by intravenous injection and for treating drug-dependent prisioners are also described. The Branch is also a member of the Working Group on HIV/AIDS of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

13. The Branch is developing curricula for training police and prison officials to apply the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice, addressed inter alia, to the situation of women prisoners and their needs. The Branch in cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, has recently been involved in the presentation of seminars on this subject to law enforcement personnel in central and Eastern Europe (for example in Albania and Romania). Further similar seminars are planned, for example in Africa, for example, and possibly in the Russian Federation.

(c) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

14. The Commission intends to formulate a base-line study of the most relevant problems associated with the social impact of drug trafficking and abuse in urban low-income sectors of Latin America and the Caribbean. It will be prepared on the basis of five studies to be carried out in the most vulnerable areas and five additional studies designed to assess the specific social impact on women living in low-income urban areas. On the basis of the studies referred to above and of ongoing consultations with governmental bodies and other international agencies carrying out projects, ECLAC also intends to formulate policy guidelines addressed to the diverse social aspects of the drug problem in the region. It will design modules for training women and young people who are community leaders in low-income urban sectors, in order to help them to promote community programmes for the prevention of drug trafficking and abuse in the sectors most exposed to the risk. ECLAC is endeavouring to raise awareness among Governments, the public and the mass media of the gravity of the social impact of illicit drugs, inter alia, including on women living in low-income areas.

B. Research institutes

1. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

15. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women is sharing the "lead agency" role with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in the preparation of the outline for the system-wide position paper on women, drug abuse and drug control, which the Inter-Agency Meeting on Coordination in Matters of International Drug Abuse Control has agreed to prepare.

16. The Institute, is collaborating with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute in the Working Group on the project on women and the family in drug abuse prevention education in Mediterranean countries. The project, conducted in cooperation with UNESCO, is intended to identify preventive strategies for educating women in various countries and to give them a clearer understanding of the problem.

17. The Institute is preparing a project on social dimensions and the role of women in drug abuse and control, to bring to light the current gaps in knowledge about women and drug abuse, as well as the socio-economic and cultural effects of drug abuse on women and their families, and to contribute to filling those gaps through national studies conducted in selected developing countries.

2. United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

18. The Institute, together with the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, is collaborating with UNESCO in the pilot project on women and the family in drug abuse prevention education in Mediterranean countries (see paragraph 16 above).

C. Specialized agencies

1. International Labour Organisation

19. The ILO considers community participation to be essential for developing effective rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes. Strategies are being worked out for motivating and facilitating participation in the programmes, making full use of the community resources available. Family intervention is to be further improved, with the special aim of involving women in rehabilitation efforts. In-depth research is to be launched into the prevention of relapse, which is a key area, with a view to developing guidelines and training material. A range of training and orientation programmes is to be developed and conducted for policy-makers, programme planners and providers of services in all regions. Models are to be set up to demonstrate the role and practical value of a variety of rehabilitation and after-care techniques and approaches.

2. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

20. In collaboration with the Mediterranean Women's Studies Institute, UNESCO has designed a questionnaire targeted at female students of secondary schools in the semi-urban and rural areas of the Prefecture of Rethymnon (Greece). It has also prepared the "Guide pour la préparation de documents nationaux pour le projet : le Rôle de la famille et plus particulièrement de la femme dans l'éducation préventive contre l'abus des drogues en Méditerrannée" (a research guide to the preparation of national papers for the pilot project on women and the family in drug abuse prevention education in Mediterranean countries) (see paragraphs 16 and 18 above).

3. World Health Organization

21. The WHO Programme on Substance Abuse, carried out in collaboration with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, has initiated a special study on women and drug abuse. In-depth case studies have been completed on drug abuse problems of women in nine countries in English-speaking Africa, Central America and Eastern Europe. An interim compilation of these case studies is now available. They will also be used in a more comprehensive joint position paper on women, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, which is being prepared in collaboration with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna. This position paper will be submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-eighth session, under the subtheme "Women in urban areas: population, nutrition and health factors for women in development,

including migration, drug consumption and AIDS". It will also serve as a background paper for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

22. Generic tools for rapid community assessment of women's drug abuse problems are being developed for countries to adapt to use in their own cultural and social contexts. The Programme on Substance Abuse is also facilitating the work of international and national women's non-governmental organizations on the prevention of drug abuse by providing educational materials and information on substance abuse.

23. Building on previous work done by the WHO Maternal and Child Health Programme and a review of the world literature prepared by the Centre for Disease Control in Atlanta, United States of America, a project is now under way to prepare guidelines for preventing foetal damage associated with substance abuse. This project has been developed in consultation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

24. The WHO Global Programme on AIDS has also paid special attention to issues relating to women and HIV infection. Collaboration between the Programme on Substance Abuse and the Global Programme on AIDS has focused on the risks to women of contracting HIV/AIDS through drug injection or through sexual contact with drug injectors.